Access Management Plan & Policies

Description

Access Management attempts to reduce and combine access points along major roadways while still encouraging complete circulation systems. The product is a street system that functions safer and more efficiently while creating a more attractive and pleasant transportation experience.

As development grows along a roadway, there must effective systems to manage street access to increase public safety, extend the life of the roadway, reduce congestion, support alternative modes of transportation, and improve the overall appearance of the roadway. With the absence of access management, roadways can deteriorate functionally and aesthetically as well as affect social, economic, physical, and environmental characteristics. The following issues arise in areas where there is little or no access management along major arterial corridors:

- Increased vehicular accidents
- Collisions involving pedestrians and cyclists
- Reduction in roadway efficiency
- Unattractive strip commercial development
- Decay of scenic views
- Dispersion of higher traffic volumes on adjacent lower class streets
- Increase in commute times, fuel consumption, emissions, area of paved surfaces

When there are many closely spaced access points to businesses and other destinations along a corridor, it makes it difficult for users to enter and exit the access points. In turn, this discourages travel to these congested areas and the patronage moves to safer and more convenient business establishments at other locations within the community.

Quick solutions to the above problems such as street widening and adding traffic signals often cause more issues in the future. Additional bypass roadways usually must be built to accommodate through traffic and attempt to improve circulation. This solution, however, only creates another location for access management issues to begin again. The real solution is to adopt an Access Management Plan that will help to stop the cycle of roadway and circulation deterioration.

Comprehensive Access Management Plans have five key elements to help alleviate the conditions caused by unregulated curb cuts and commercial development along major corridors:

1. Classify roadways according to function and giving them a hierarchy
2. Plan, design, and maintain roadways based on the hierarchy classifications
3. Detail acceptable levels of access and volume levels of roadway classifications and establish criteria for spacing of signals and access points
4. Apply appropriate geometric design and engineering standards at access points that relate to the roadway classification
5. Establish policies, regulations, and permitting procedures to implement the management plan

Some of the specific ways that transportation planners can influence the functionality of a roadway is through traffic signal spacing, location of driveways, median openings, and multi-modal options.

- Traffic signal spacing is among the most important access management components. According to the Access Management Manual decreasing signal spacing from four to two per mile decreases total delay by nearly 60% and vehicle-hours of travel by nearly 50%. (TRB, 2003)

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- The location and design of driveways and median openings are also important elements of access management. At many locations, the underlying roadway pattern is one of one-mile spacing. Providing for signalized intersections at these crossroads (whether traffic signals are installed initially or not) and allowing full access with median openings at mid-points between intersections is ideal for most arterials. Other access points should be allowed as right turn in/right turn out with no median cuts.
- Multi-modal planning refers to early consideration of transit (routes, stop locations, waiting facilities) and bicycle/pedestrian facilities (sidewalks, bike lanes, trailheads, etc.) The key point is that it is much easier to plan for these facilities as an early step of planning than it is to retrofit them to existing facilities. Including them in an access management plan can also encourage property owners and developers to incorporate them into private development plans.

Different local or state agencies can adopt these types of guidelines which make them directives or regulations that are much more enforceable. In addition to roadway regulations, municipalities can establish land development regulations such as subdivision controls or lot dimension requirements that can influence access issues.

In addition to regulatory attempts of access management, key issues can be prevented or solved through the physical design of interchanges, intersections, medians, driveways, auxiliary lanes, etc. These design criteria can be included as a design manuals and guidebooks for future development standards.

Relevant Statutes

- IC-8-4.5-3 Transportation Corridor Use

Capacity Recommendations

- Access management plans and policies can be completed by hiring experienced transportation planners.

Guidelines / Considerations for Implementation

- Access Management Plan effectiveness relates to consistency with other Land Use Development Plans such as Subdivision Controls.

Example Ordinances

- Kentucky Model Access Management Ordinance – This model ordinance is for use by communities that wish to implement access management programs to fix special problem areas along major thoroughfares. [http://www.accessmanagement.gov/pdf/KY_Ordinance.pdf]
- Florida Model Land Development & Subdivision Regulations that Support Access Management – Access Management issues are addressed through other types of land development controls where policies and guidelines are included within the ordinances and regulations. [http://www.accessmanagement.gov/pdf/Land_Regs.pdf]

Example Studies

- **Indiana Access Management Guide** – The Indiana Access Management Guide is intended to be the document that governs all access management decisions for INDOT. The concepts therein can also be used by community/county entities to manage access decisions at the local level. [http://www.in.gov/dot/div/planning/iams/guide_total.pdf]

- **Iowa Access Management Handbook** – This handbook provides communities with guidelines on how to create an Access Management Program along with example ordinances for both cities and counties. [http://www.accessmanagement.gov/pdf/Iowa_handbook.pdf]
- **Michigan Access Management Guidebook** – This resource provides communities ways to reduce traffic congestion and improve traffic safety. It explains why, how, and when to use certain Access Management techniques in communities that face common traffic problems. [http://www.accessmanagement.gov/pdf/GuidebookMI.pdf]

Helpful References and Links

- **Access Management Committee** – This is a national scale committee that "shares the latest knowledge, expertise, and experience to facilitate leadership and partnerships to advance state-of-the-practice in access management and its integration into establishing planning, policy, and design process." [http://www.accessmanagement.gov/]
- **Transportation Research Board: Access Management Manual** – "TRB's Access Management Manual provides technical information on access management techniques, together with information on how access management programs can be effectively developed and administered. It presents access management -- the systematic control of the location, spacing, design, and operation of driveways, median openings, interchanges, and street connections to a roadway -- comprehensively, in an effort to integrate planning and engineering practices with the transportation and land use decisions that contribute to access outcomes." [http://www.trb.org/news/blurb_detail.asp?id=1427]

Helpful Contacts

- **INDOT**
  Steve Smith ssmith@indot.in.gov
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  Daniel Buck dbuck@indot.in.gov
  100 N. Senate Ave.
  Room IGCN 755
  Indianapolis, IN 46204
  Phone: (317) 232-5533

- American Planning Association Planning Advisory Service: This service provided, by the American Planning Association, is intended to help communities obtain information about different planning topics and to answer any planning questions. Communities may subscribe to the service or seek assistance on an as-needed basis. The service utilizes a vast amount of resources to answer any question and provide information such as sample ordinances, reports, etc.

  Contact:
  American Planning Association
  Planning Advisory Service
  122 S. Michigan Ave., Suite 1600
  Chicago, IL 60603
  Phone: 312-431-9100
  Fax: 312-431-9985
  pas@planning.org

- Indiana Planning Association List of Consultants – This resource lists numerous private consulting firms that offer planning services. Some of the most common tasks performed by consultants are the formation of comprehensive plans, corridor studies, zoning ordinances, and other development plans and regulations. However, the resource is only available to Indiana Planning Association members.

  Indiana Planning Association
  PO Box 44804
  Indianapolis, IN 46244
  (317) 767-7780
  http://www.indianaplanning.com

Other Possible Funding Sources

- **Indiana State Transportation Corridor Fund** – This is a fund that is established by Indiana Code IC-8-4.5-3-7 which states that all federal money, transportation revenue, special contributions, and appropriations must be used for purposed stated within the rest of the article.

Program Objectives and Issues Addressed

- Growth management
- Transportation/ Infrastructure planning
- Transportation circulation
- Visual aesthetics
- Corridor planning
- Sprawl
- Public safety

See Also

- Areawide Thoroughfare Plan
- Comprehensive Corridor Plan
- Design & Construction Standards for Infrastructure